## SACRED DANCE GUILD

wsletter

## JOURNAL

newsletter

Fall Issue (September) 1982-83 Vol.XV No.1

### PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dear Member,

A time of transition---what a wonderful opportunity to assess who we are. The Sacred Dance Guild is exploring this very question as we move into our twenty-fifth year. This is a time to listen to the members and attempt to respond to your needs and visions for the future.

Since the annual meeting at our national Sacred Dance Guild festival in Miami (March 1982), a new board has been working to respond to  $\underline{YOU}$ . A primary concern was communication. So that you may be aware of what is happening in sacred dance across the country, more frequent printed communication has begun.

These "between <u>Journal</u>" mailings will present you an opportunity to share and exchange ideas. The pages are unbound so that you may keep those things which <u>you</u> find useful. Last week I received a fascinating letter from Mrjorie Smith in N. Calif. about her ten years in a dance choir. In the same mail was a copy of a program of a very interesting and impressive sacred dance concert, sent by JoAnn Robertson of Richardson, Texas, the artistic director. I look forward to sharing these with you in a future mailing.

Please send information about any sacred dance activities between now and February to me by the end of September (3917 N.E. 44th St. Vancouver, WA 98661). Your event or plans may spark an idea for someone else. We need to support and encourage each other whether we are "just beginning", technically advanced, interested in leadership or concert work, or involved in congregational movement.

The format of the <u>Journal</u> was another focus of your concern. Toni Intravaia, our faithful editor, has collected articles for this issue which we hope will interest and challenge you. We hope you like the more concise format and encourage you to respond to <u>Journal</u> articles by sending letters to the editor. Toni would also appreciate hearing your ideas or receiving articles you have written. (Toni Intravaia 201 Hewitt Carbondale, IL 62901) Articles for the winter <u>Journal</u> should be sent this month.

#### Details:

\*\*Let the board know if you wish to receive minutes of the board meetings. Otherwise, minutes will be sent only to officers, chapter representatives, regional representatives, and past presidents.

\*\*Membership questions should be sent to Eva Herndon and Joan Sparrow (82 Hillside Carlisle, MA 01741). Please make sure all information concerning you is correct before the new membership directory goes to press this fall.

Keep those cards and letters coming...as we grow and work together. But let us also remember the words of Lightning Hopkins---

God approves of us when we work But smiles on us when we dance!

Peace be with you!

Susan Cole, President

### \*

SACRED DANCE GUILD FESTIVAL '83 25th Anniversary Festival August 1-5, 1983 Berkeley, California

COME TO THE S.D.G.'S 25th ANNIVERSARY FESTIVAL: SPECTRUM OF SACRED DANCE

Come to Berkeley, California for the 25th Anniversary Sacred Dance Guild Festival and Pacific School of Religion Dance week combined, August 1-5, 1983. SPECT-RUM OF SACRED DANCE is the theme; and the widest array of sacred dancers ever assembled will lead the workshops, classes, worships with dance, and evening performances. Preregister now and save \$25. (Cost for the tuition is \$150 if you preregister before March 1; but the cost will be \$175 for later registrations.) Rooms will be available for an average of \$12 per night which is one of the least expensive ways to visit the San Francisco Bay Area. Pacific School of Religion rooms overlook the Golden Gate Bridge and the city of San Francisco. The seminary campus is located one block north of the University of California Berkeley. Send your \$25 preregistration check made out to "P.S.R.-Dance" to Doug Adams at Pacific School of Religion, 1798 Scenic Avenue, Berkeley, California 94709. (Indicate if you wish PSR housing Housing comes with access to Kitchen facilities, although you can order lunches from PSR staff. The elegant 25th Anniversary Sacred Dance Guild Banquet will be held at the University of California Faculty Club.)

\*\* \*\* \*\* Recommended Reading \*\* \*\* \*\*

1.

Dancing with the Early Christians is Constance Fisher's new book edited by Doug Adams and available from The Sharing Company for \$6.95 plus \$1.00 postage and handling. (Sharing Company, P.O. Box 2224, Austin, Texas 78768-2224.) The table of content shows the rich diversity of dancing in the early church from Jerusalem to Corinth, from Alexandria to Rome. She reconstructs dozens of dances from the first four centuries showing how Christians danced mysterious interpretations of the divine presence, the boisterous foot stomping of evangelical zeal and much more. Many of these dances we can do today with congregations of all ages or with a dance choir to heighten a particular season of the church year. Many would be helpful in Christian education; and a number powerfully embody scripture for worship. (Review: Doug Adams)

2.

Margaret Joy Philippou's <u>Transcendental</u>
<u>Dancing</u> is available from The Sharing
Company for \$3.00 plus \$1.00 postage and
handling. (The Sharing Company, PO Box
2224, Austin, Texas 78768-2224.) The
publication describes many dances from
around the world that help us "go beyond"
and unify the effective and the intellectual aspects of our nature to become
whole and integrated. Sections of the
table of content are: "What is Transcendental Dancing? Primitive Origins
of Dance, The Couple Encounter Dance,

Initiation Dances, Animal Dances, The Bird Dance, The Tree Creeper Dance, The Butterfly Dance, The Seal Dance, The Cock Dance, Other Animals, LeapingDances, Stride Dancing, Lunge Dancing, Dances of Union with Nature, Automatic Dancing, Religious Dancing, The Sitting Dance, Whirl Dances, Transcendental Dancing, Possible Combinations of Body and Hand Motions, Simple Walking Steps, Compound Walking Steps, Hands, Arm Movements, Leg Movements, Foot Movements, The Trunk, Examining all tje Possibilities of Motion, The Various Directions, Bodily Positions, The Head Movements, Facial Expressions, Action Movements, and Sharing Sessions." (Review by Doug Adams)

3.

Dancing Through Pentecost: Dance Language for Worship from Pentecost to Thanksgiv-ing by Marian B. MacLeod, edited by Doug Adams (35pp., available at \$3.00 per copy plus 50¢ postage from The Sharing Company, P.O. Box 2224, Austin, Texas 78768-2224.)

4.

Look Up and Live by Margaret Taylor, edited by Doug Adams (98 pp, 1979 edition, \$4.95 from The Sharing Company, PO Box 2224, Austin, Texas 78768-2224)

5.

The Lady of the Dance: A Movement Approach to The Biblical Figure of Wisdom in Worship and Education by Hal Taussig (24 pages, \$2.50 plus 50¢ postage from The Sharing Company, PO Box 2224, Austin, Texas 78768-2224).

6.

Music and Dance in the Worship Program of the Church by Connie Fisher (20 pages, \$2.50 plus 50¢ postage from The Sharing Company, PO Box 2224, Austin, Texas 78768-2224.)

### "BIT" REVIEWS

From The Rocky Mountain Sacred Dance Guild Newsletter, February 1982

(Article contributed by John Schneider

and Lucia Hogeveen)
"The essence of liturgical dance comes
forth from the experience of life. In
as much as we allow God tottouch the
very depths of our lives our dance becomes a form of priesthood. The constant tension for liturgical dance is between prayer and performance. Without prayer in our lives, our performance
is an empty shell. At the same time

dance is the medium for a liturgical dancer to express his/her prayer.

"In the context of a community, liturgical dancers from all across the United
States and Canada gathered in Berkeley,
California this past summer to share
their medium. The campus of the Pacific
School of Religion became our home, and
Doug Adams, Judith Rock and Carla DeSola our spiritual leaders. And spiritual it was. We began each day with a
time of meditation. Meditation that
allowed us to center on the presence of

of God in our lives at the same time we were becoming atuned to our bodies and loosening up for the day's dancing.

"The days were divided into times for technique as well as separate times with each of the three leaders. Three faith filled and gifted individuals who shared dance/prayer with us in their own unique ways. Doug Adams led us in examining and experimenting with congregational dancing. Using songs and dances familiar to most people we danced in ways that involved more of the congregations' bodies in their prayer.

"Judith was the reflector and led us inside ourselves to enable us to reflect our very life experiences with our dance. The times with Judith were real work as we laughed and cried our way through life experiences. One had the feeling of being led on a journey, a journey which sought to integrate one's experiences, recognizing God's presence in those experiences, and then allowing that process to be shared with others in our dance.

"The scriptures were the focus of Carla DeSola and one had the feeling that the entire time was a period of prayer. Carla is very aware of God working and living in her life and she sought to let us also be aware of this life and touching God. Through improvisation we experienced the scriptures in new and meaningful ways. We truly prayed the scriptures, God's word, with our bodies.

"The week culminated with a shared worship as we prayed, danced, blessed..." \*

From <u>Leaping 12</u>, The Christian Dance Fellowship of Australia, P.O. Box 373 Milson's Point, NSW 2061 Australia

"Toymaker and Son is an hour long presentation in an allegorical form that combines the use of dance, mime, narration and music to dramatically present the gospel of Jesus Christ. It begins with the rebellion of Satan and moves right through creation, the birth, life & betrayal, death & resurrection of Jesus and concludes with a scene that shows the ongoing victory we can have in Him everyday. Written by Colin Harbinson, an elder at our base, it was first performed in England by ten year old school children and since has been performed by many different teams in Europe, The Americas, and Asia, having life changing results wherever it has been... We went into the T.V. studios and made a video of it...I know God works through the arts. I know because I have seen it first hand. Whether it be with Godhungry people in the third world or with the more apathetic western world, people are attracted by the music, costuming and movement and people are reached...."

\*

From Leaping 13: The Dancer's Paraphrase of I Cor. 13:

"Though I dance with the expertise of Fonteyn and the beauty of angels, but have not the sense of loyalty which impels me to be faithful to my group in all its rehearsals and services, my

talents are of no more value to my Lord and His church than sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. And if I have the gift of beautiful movement and know all the mysteries of technique and have all knowledge of a large repertoire and if I have all the poise, so as to move my onlookers, but am not faithful to my group and its rehearsals and services, my ability is nothing to the Lord and His church. And if I display my ability before my church and I I dance my most beautiful dances, but do it, not for the purpose of glorifying my Lord, it is a vain offering and profits me nothing.

"Faithfulness is long-lasting and results in a sweet spirit. The faithful is not proud of itself, does not create distractions in rehearsal, seeks not glory for its own sake, is not temperamental, takes not the suggestion of the leader as personal criticism, rejoices not in the mistakes of other group members, but rejoices when everyone works together to make the group an instrument of praise to the Lord; bears its own responsibility; believes in extra rehearsals when needed, hopes continually to develop better dance group members, endures the hard work necessary in order to have a good group.

"The faithful dancer never fails, but whether there be excuses, they shall be done away with, whether there be glory seeking soloists, they shall cease, whether there be spasmodic attendance, it shall be done away. For we know in part, and we predict in part the results of our labours; but when that which is perfect is come, our knowledge and predictions

will be made of little importance as we behold the true fruits of our service.

"When I was a new dancer, I felt that I would never learn, I thought the technique was too hard for me.

"Now that I have dedicated my body to the Lord, I have put away childish impressions, for I know that the Lord will help me. For now we understand these things only partially, without understanding; but the time will come when I shall realize the fruits of my faithfulness, even as God knew what these fruits would be w when He called me to serve Him, and I shall know that my faithfulness was more than worth all the effort it required of me.

"But now abides a beautiful body, the ability to use it, and faithfulness, these three. And the greatest of these is faithfulness."

(Adapted by Rita Virtanen.)

\*

John Neumeier's Tour de Force: "Legend of Joseph" by Horst Koegler, <u>Dance Magazine</u>, June, 1977:

"Ever since Fokine staged the first production of Richard Strauss' Legend of Joseph for Diaghilev's Ballets Russes in 1914, it has been considered a white elephant of a ballet, not much helped by the concoction of libretto by Hugo von Hofmannsthal and Harry Count Kessler, nor by Jose Maria Sert's decor & la Paola

Veronese. None of the ensuing productions—among them a 1933 Royal Danish Ballet mounting by George Balanchine—has really managed to overcome the inherent clumsiness in the piece's pantomime. It has been classified as an extravaganza rather than a guine ballet: This is why the central female role has been performed so often by an ex-opera diva rather than by a legitimate ballerina.

"All this has been changed by John Neumeier, at the Vienna State Opera on February 11.

"With Haigen and Judith Jamison the Legend of Joseph has, for the first time in its sixty year history, become a legitimate ballet hit. ... Neumeier has made this a truly thrilling ballet, full of psychological insights into the troubled souls of Potiphar andtthe court..and into Joseph..."

\*

Kenneth MacMillan's "Requiem", Stuttgart's newest addition by Horst Koegler, <u>Dance</u> <u>Magazine</u>, April, 1977

"...Faure's <u>Requiem</u>...yields so much more willingly to its choreographic treatment than do Mahler's...

"....individual figures emerge: Marcia Haydee, lifted high in the air, a mourner of infinite sorrow and soothing pity—the mother image of the eternal comforter. She is mostly partnered by the strong and resilient Reid Anderson. The Agnus dei is led by Birgit Keil, whose crystalline purity echoes the

music's feline grace and tenderness, which she then passes on to her four accompanying couples. Cragun has his big solo in the Offertorium—an energetic outburst of his tortured soul, with thrashing, thrusting, piercing movements, which seem to go limp, leading him to nowhere but the reali—ation of the futility of his rage...."

\*

From Maryknoll, September, 1982 "Canticle of Brother Sun" by St. Francis of Assisi

Praised be You, my Lord in all Your creatures,
Especially Sir Brother Sun,
Who makes the day and enlightens us through You.
He is lovely and radiant and grand;
And he heralds You, his Most High Lord.

Praised be You, my Lord, for Sister Moon And for the stars. You have hung them in heaven shining and precious and fair.

And praise to You, my Lord, in Brother Wind,
In air and cloud, calm, and every weather
That sustains your creatures.
Praised be You, my Lord, for Sister Water,
So very useful, humble, precious and chaste.

Yes, and praise to You, my Lord, for Brother Fire. Through him You illumine our night, And he is handsome and merry, robust and strong.

Praised be You, my Lord, for our Sister, Mother Earth

Who nourishes us and teaches us, Bringing forth all kinds of fruits and colored flowers and herbs.

O, and praise to You, my Lord For those who forgive one another in Your love

And who bear sickness andttrials, Blessed are they who live on in peace, For they will be crowned by You, Most High!

Praise to You my Lord, for our Sister bodily death,
From whom no living person may escape:
How dreadful for those who die in sin,
How lovely for those who are found in
Your Most Holy Will,
For the second death can do them no harm.

O praise and bless my Lord, Thank Him and serve Him Humbly but grandly!

### \*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*

fffffffffff FILMS fffffffffffff

Harald Kreutzberg's Dances of Death by John Mueller, <u>Dance Magazine</u>, April, 1977

"Available in 16mm are two valuable films featuring Kreutzberg Each shows him in a different commentary on the dance of death...The Eternal Circle...runs twelve minutes and can be rented from Dance Film Archive, U. of Rochester, Rochester, NY 14627...Paracelsus runs105 minutes...can be rented from Trans-World Films,332 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago, Il 60604."

# JOURNAL JOURNAL

Editor's Note: This issue of the JOURNAL will contain a series of articles instead of a central theme. Several will "prelude" the 25th anniversary of the Sacred Dance Guild celebration!

### FIFTY YEARS OF SACRED DANCE by Erika Thimey

(Erika Thimey, S.D.G. member and one of the early liturgical dancers and choreographers, contributes this article in celebration of the 25th year.)

During my first summer in the United States I had many exciting new experiences and discovered some of the astonishingly different ways of the American people; it was not at all what I had been used to!

I was in Chicago, Ill. and the year was 1932. There were many churches of different denominations in my neighborhood, but all were Protestant. It was very not and, of course, air conditioning did

not yet exist. All windows and doors were wide open, and one could hear the hum of the big ceiling fans. I would always peek in and watch the services from the outside, fascinated. That was when I got the idea of liturgical dance.

Even though much of the music was familiar to me, everything else was different. American worship seemed to me to be much more active, with much moving and restlessness. All this vitality and energy! But, why not make it more artistic and even more expressive and meaningful?

I discussed my ideas with my manager, Mme. Ludwig, who was very understanding and helpful. She introduced me to some ministers, including Dr. Von Ogden Vogt, pastor of the First Unitarian Church and professor of Ecclesiastical Arts at Chicago University. He was very enthusiastic and cooperative. He was well aware of the significance and historical development of dance as an expression of worship from primitive through biblical to present times.

We worked out an evening Christmas program with Dr. Vogt's full cooperation as minister, as well as that of the music director and the entire choir. Some of my dance students from the North Shore Conservatory participated and members of the Meadville Theological Seminary and myself as the soloist. It was presented as a "Christmas Pageant" on December 18, 1932. The whole thing was beautifully received and was a big success.

By Easter 1933 I had choreographed a com-

pletely new service again for the First Unitarian Church and was invited to many other churches to do something similar. The First Unitarian Church and a Methodist Church organized weekly dance classes. The rapid progress of these students was amazing. Dr. Vogt encouraged me early on not only to do longer dance dramas or sermons, but also parts of the regular Sunday morning services, such as hymns, prayers, offertory, etc. The word "dance", however, was avoided as much as possible. We used expressions like Pageant, Rhythm Choir, and later, Sacred Dance. Modern Dance was hardly known in America yet, and we felt that the word "dancing" in a church would project in most people's mind the vision of frivolous, sexy nightclub dancing and would, of course, be sacriligious and completely impossible.

Looking at my old newspaper clippings and scrapbooks I am amazed to realize how quickly this new idea took hold and spread. The interest and enthusiasm of the theological students was especially helpful in the growth of liturgical dance to different parts of the United States. After their ordinations, they established Rhythm-Choirs in their own parishes. Often I was invited to work with them and present new celebrations and Vesper Services. So--I traveled a great deal and became acquainted with this huge and wonderful United States.

During 1933 and 34 I trained a movement choir and danced twice at Dr. John H. Lathrop's church in Brooklyn Heights, New York and at the Waltham, Mass. Unitarian Church. The newspapers always

printed long and favorable articles with many pictures. Apparently, the Boston articles were reprinted by other papers from as far away as Louisville, Kentucky and the San Antonio Evening News. Later, I worked in Milwaukee, Beloit, St. Paul, Miami, Des Moines, Manchester, Rutherford, Washington, Baltimore, Alexandria, and San Antonio. I was also invited to Northwestern University in Evanston, Ill., James Millikin University in Decatur, Ill., Duke University in Durham, N.C., and Howard University, American University. and George Washington University in Washington, D.C. I also went to Hood College in Frederick. Md. and to conferences and retreats, such as Star Island, Maine.

I left Chicago in 1938 to become the dance partner of Jan Veen in Boston, Mass. He, however, was interested only in concert and theater dance. In the fall of 1939 I settled in Washington, D.C. Though I continued touring with Jan Veen part-time for seven years, I stayed in Washington until my retirement in 1979. (I had opened my own studio, The Washington Dance Theater, in 1943.)

During these forty years the Modern Dance became an internationally established and cultivated art form and the Sacred Dance grew into a recognized, accepted, and respected form of worship all over the United States and abroad. All of the arts are a reflection of man; his development, thoughts, needs, attitudes, accomplishments, catastrophies, and changing times. Our young people have a great need for spiritual expression. Liturgical dance fulfills this need. It is for this reason

that liturgical dance has grown so rapidly and spontaneously.

There is, however, one aspect that is not always taken into consideration. There is a great difference between congregational dancing and that of a soloist or small group, just as there is a great difference between one's personal, private prayer and that of the clergy for and with his congregation. In Sacred Dance, as in all other arts, selfexpression can be very satisfying to the performer, but will be meaningless and frustrating if it does not project and communicate with the congregation. Therefore. the right leadership is needed. Not every musician can be a good director. The same holds true for the Sacred Dance groups and their directors. have witnessed some wonderful and moving church presentations, but I have also been embarrassed and even turned off by some smaller grups and soloists. The Sacred Dance Guild Workshops and more sensitive training does and will continue to help a great deal.

Looking back, I realize the tremendous value of my professional training at the Mary Wigman School in Germany. The clearly stated aim for every student was to gain complete technical control so that one's body would truly become an instrument. Our training was obviously in contrast and even rebellion to the Ballet. We were not to learn a movement vocabulary or a technical style, but to achieve complete freedom through mastery, control, and deep understanding of the uniqueness of our instrument. We were guided to greater awareness and sensi-

tivity. The significance, challenge, dependence, and enormous vastness of all the possibilities of space, in the abstract as well as realistic sense, were especially stressed. The dynamic energy scale, from utmost tension to complete relaxation was particularly emphasized. We learned to recognize and respect honesty. One cannot lie with the human body; it shows at once. We learned compassion, harmony and unity with other dancers (group studies) and yet we were all unique individuals and were expected to have enough courage and talent to make this visible.

Another aim of the Wigman School was the development of individual creativity. Whatever you presented had to be motivated by a full conviction and had to be larger than life so that it projected and communicated with the audience. All the many experiments and explorations we did at that time (1928-30) makes me smile at the present avant-guarde and post-modern attempts as old stuff.

Most American churches were built without expecting drama or dance presentations. The space is usually cramped and the sightlines poor. For me and my dance company, however, that created a wonderful challenge. We tried to meaningfully incorporate into the choreography the interior architectural structure. Steps and stairs, railings, pews, windows and windowsills, altar and pulpits, balconies and pillars, and, of course, aisles were fully exploited. I am glad to notice that some sacred dancers now effectively dare to do that also.

In the beginning of my career I was completely responsible for all choreographical subject matter and the selection of the music or narration accompaniment. Sometimes I found talented composers who would write new music for my dances. During the last twenty years or so, however, I received commissions often from various churches for new choreography to wonderful contemporary and classical msuic. We presented these as part of the regular Sunday morning service with live music or as a special evening service. Many other churches engaged us later to repeat these compositions for them. A few of my favorite works were:

Ceremony of Carols by Benjamin Britten.
This is based on medieval English church songs and poetry.

Rejoice in the Lamb, music also by Britten with the words of 18th century poet Christopher Smart, dramatizes the need and the search for salvation.

Missa Criolla, composed by Ariel Ramirez in 1963 is based on South American folk music.

Lamentations of Jeremiah with music by Alberto Ginastera expresses the human agony and torment and the reliance and confidence of God's mercy.

Santa Maria de Iquique is a folk cantata by Luis Advis. It is an impassioned lament inspired bytthe massacre of 3600 striking Chilean salt miners and their families in 1907.

A Candle Procession is a moving process-

ional in which the dancers hold lit candles and dance to the music of Johann Sebastion Bach's "Sheep Will Safely Graze".

 $\frac{Psalm}{Psalm}$  is an interpretation of the 100th  $\frac{Psalm}{Psalm}$  with specially commissioned music by Joseph Ott.

A Fear not of One with commissioned music by E. Lohoefer explores inner faith using excerpts from T.S. Elliot's "Murder in the Cathedral".

A Day for Dancing, music by Lloyd Pfautsch, is a Christmas cantata, based on 15th and 16th century carols.

My best wishes to the wonderful Sacred Dance Guild for continued growth, further inspired work, and valuable guidance. May the next 25 years bring as much inner rewards, response, growth, and peace to all S.D.G. members as I gained during the last 50 years. The Sacred Dance certainly made my life meaningful.

God Bless You,

Erika Thimey

(Ed. Note: Carolyn Deitering, S.D.G. member contributes this article. See her bio at the end of the article.)

PRAYERFUL GESTURE AND THE CHRISTIAN ART OF DANCE by Carolyn Deitering

(This article from <u>ONTHEMOVE</u> originally appeared in the August-September 1981 issue of <u>Pastoral Music</u>, the journal of the North American Association of Pas-

toral Musicians in Washington, D.C.)

The arts of music and visual design have been present and continuously developing in the Church in recent centuries. The same cannot be said for the art of movement, dance. Although there are records of dance of a communal or folk nature in liturgical practices of the earliest centuries, because of abuses, and fears connected with sexuality, dance has not been developed as an art in the bhurch in recent years. The bishops now state that "dance can become (a) meaningful part of the liturgical celebration if done by truly competent persons in the manner that befits the total liturgical action."

Because of the absence of dance from the immediate history of the Church, liturgical dancers are free to create their art anew. In fact, they must do just that. It will not be enough simply to transfer secular dance to the Church. No artificiality or limited vocabulary of rote movements will do. The new Christian art of dance must arise from the natural, God-given language of human movement, and be as limitless in its vocabulary as the God of whom it speaks is limitless!

The creation of this dance will be both difficult and easy. Difficult because Christian dancers must draw the form of their dance from their own feeling and faith rather than imitating the forms of theatrical or show dance; easy because the material of their art is a gift from God and readily available: natural, free movement of the human body united with mind and spirit.

### Dance by an Individual or Group

As much as possible, liturgical dancers should be well-trained in the disciplines of their art as well as in liturgy (for the same reason that liturgical musicians need to be trained in both music and liturgy). The standards which parishes set for their arts of music and visual design should apply also to the art of dance. Perhaps the greatest threat to the acceptance of dance as a liturgical art (and the greatest objection to it by many who have witne-sed it) is amateurism. Dances to be offered during a liturgical celebration should serve, not distract from the liturgical action; be appropriate for the community to which they are being offered; and be well-planed and executed.

It is important that children be encouraged and educated in the art of dance, that they gain experience in sharing their dancing -- right along with their music and banners -- in children's and family liturgies, that they witness quality liturgical dance while they are growing up, and that those who are particularly interested be given training and opportunity to develop their craft.

Clothing for the liturgical dance (which is always of great concern to those who oppose or are unsure of dance as a liturgical art) should permit freedom of movement without causing the attention of the congregation to be transferred from the movement expression to the attire of the dancer...

do not encourage group movement. However,

most buildings will allow some (if well planned) processions of the people, and movement in the pews. At present time, however, congregational movement-prayers or dances will most easily take place in large circles in a field or parking lot prior to or following liturgy, or in lines processing around the outside of the church.

In summary, the American Conference of Catholic Bishops encourages both liturgical dance by competent persons and congregational movement through ritual gesture and procession.

Vatican II's constitution on the Sacred Liturgy invites the faithful and ministers to "active participation...by actions, gestures and bodily attitudes." Strong, loving and wise leadership by priests, dancers and religious educators is now needed to meet these challenges...

Strong, confidentlleadership from persons convinced of the beauty of the human person as a body-mind-spirit unity,

Loving leadership which will move congregations to see dance and themselves, in a non-threatening way and at a pace good for the entire community, and

Leadership which is willing to become wise and educated and practiced in the disciplines of dance as a Christian art and of liturgy so that the two disciplines might come together in a way which is mutually enriching and beneficial to the people of God.

Carolyn Deitering is a liturgical dancer and creative dance teacher in Tuscon, Arizona. She recently spent five weeks in Australia teaching and performing for the Christian Dance Fellowship of Australia. This spring and summer, Carolyn taught and performed in Santa Fe, New Mexico, Washington, D. C., Oakland and Lafayette, California, and Miami, Florida.

(Ed. Note: Janet Skidmore, SDG Member of Columbus, Ohio, submits this article.)

"...David and all the Israelites made merry before the Lord with all their strength..." (2 Sam. 6:5)
"...You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength." (Mk. 12:30)

### SOME THOUGHTS ON DANCING IN WORSHIP

We dance for unity. Through dancing, we can unite our professed beliefs with physical actions. We can support our belief in the Incarnation and Resurrection by our own affirmation of the physical. We unite body, mind, and spirit into one expression of worship. We unite the "sacred" with the "secular" aspects of our lives. Through dancing, too, we are united in a tangible way with each other into one corporate expression of worship.

We dance to express things we may not be able to express in any other way. For some of us, the joy we feel in the Lord's

presence may demand our physical involvement. Jesus says, "Rejoice, and leap for joy!" (Lk. 6:23)

We dance for wholeness, as an aid in the process of our redemption. We become whole people by the unity between our spiritual and physical selves; bytthe uniting of our beliefs with our actions. We become whole people by experiencing our feelings fully, and thus understanding them better. We become A whole people by interaction with other members of the body of Christ.

Dancing, we have had the opportunity to look into the faces of those in the circle with us, instead of looking at the back of the person seated in front of us. We take three steps forward and one back, three forward and one back symbolic of our progress as a people in our walk with God. The circle dance opens into a line, curving into other parts of the room, as we proclaim our shared gospel to other worshippers. Finally, we process arm in arm out into the world, to proclaim the good news there.

Joining in the dance is encouraged at least twice; once to conquer inhibition, and once to make an objective judgment about whether dance can be an aid to one's own worship. Although it is not absolutely necessary to our worship, dancing enriches and adds variety, just as singing, clapping, lifting hands and rising to stand do. In all of these actions, our focus is not on the action itself, but on the Lord, on what we can express to him and to one another through these actions.

All can participate in dancing, or at least in supportive singing and hand clapping/raising. If only the young women dance, it is like saying God's kingdom is only made up of young women. Just as both men and women, young and old have particular functions in the Body of Christ, so each individual lends something unique to the dance. Dancing is a physical expression of the worshipping community; therefore, the entire community must be represented.

If dancing in worship makes us uncomfortable, perhaps that is not all bad. If worship is always what we expect, always what makes us feel comfortable, we may fall into the habit of associating God's presence with comfortableness. We need to be a people willing to acknowledge God's presence in what we are not comfortable with. Otherwise, how can He help us to grow? Praying out loud and sharing before the body are actions which made most of us extremely nervous the first time we tried them. Yet without them, our worship must be practiced for a time to find out objectively whether it is beneficial or not. If we abandon it immediately because it makes us uncomfortable and so takes our focus off of the Lord, wwe will never know what it might be like after that period of awkwardness is worked through. It may be that dancing is not beneficial to some people. However, it may also be that, once inhibition is lost, a wonderful vehicle for expression is discovered.

Worship is in part an action. Whether we feel worshipful when dancing is not the criteria for whether dancing can be an act of worship or not. By the very act of

dancing, we can express to God our willingness to praise Him, regardless of our feelings.

In his book on worship, J. G. Davies says that a Church which believes in the resurrection of the body cannot rest content with a limited physical expression of worship. Furthermore, he says, "A Church which believes in the Incarnation cannot disparge the carnal. A Church which believes in the unity of body and soul must do all it can to declare the redemption that overcomes the dichotomy between them."

Brothers and sisters, let us worship the Lord in the dance!

Janet Skidmore

(Ed. Note: The following article is by Jane Rickenbaugh of Milwaukie, Oregon)

### ARTISTIC EXCELLENCE IN SACRED DANCE

As my involvement with sacred dance has increased over the last few years, I have noticed a deeper commitment to excellence among many of the members of the Sacred Dance Guild. I am encouraged by this and feel that the Board of Directors of the Columbia-Willamette Chapter of the Guild can offer ideas and guidelines to foster continued growth in this area.

Besides the necessity of careful choreographic preparation and adequate rehearsal time, there are personal attitudes towards sacred or liturgical dance

that need to be carefully examined. It is necessary at all times to recognize that the demands of private expression of feeling and public statements of worship are vastly different. Feelings we may comfortably share with an intimate group of friends may be entirely inappropriate when shared with a larger, more diverse group. The same is true of choreography in Sacred Dance. When we step into the larger world of art and worship, we take the responsibilities of other people's lives with us. We must be careful to remember that spiritual convictions and feelings must not be released publicly until they are undergirded by the craft and discipline of our art form. We cannot afford to indulge in a private spiritual catharsis at the expense of our worshipping community and our art. One way to avoid this is by constantly airing and examining the religious convictions from which we create our dances.

Another is to become actively involved in the field of dance. We need to keep in constant touch with all aspects of dance, those labeled secular as well as sacred. Some of the most spiritual contributions in dance have been made by artists whom I would not consider conventionally religious. The works that cometto my mind are Martha Graham's"St. Joan", Charles Weidman's "Easter Oratorial", and Jose Limon's "There Is A Time", There are, of course, many more. We need to acknowledge and respect the professionalism in the secular world, and then realistically create standards of excellence appropriate to our own situation.

Most of us technically cannot achieve the performance pinnacle of professional dance companies. But we can be well prepared and properly rehearsed. A choreographic axiom is that it takes anywhere from three to six hours of work to produce one minute of polished choreography. Although there are exceptions on both sides of the scale, I have found this to be a good rule of thumb.

We must also make a conscious commitment to choose quality over quantity. We should not allow outside pressures to force us to produce more than is feasible. It is sometimes necessary to say "no" to persons and organizations who want us to choreograph and peform "just two or three dances for a very spcial program" in two weeks. To avoid shoddy and trivial work we need to educate groups and individuals about the realistic demands involved in our creative work. And that means clearly telling them that a good deal of time and very often money is involved in the endeaver. A realistic "no" can be an affirmation of faith.

When we are concerned about the integrity of our own work, we communicate the value of sacred dance to others. A deeply felt respect for excellence when wisely acted upon translates into a statement of reverence for our kreator and our art. We can only truly worship God when we offer the best that is in us.

Jane Rickenbaugh, Chairperson Columbia-Willamette Chapter, Sacred Dance Guild

( © June 1982 Jane Rickenbaugh)

(Ed. Note: The following article is by Susanne Renner, one of the Editors of the Quarterly newsletter of the Columbia-Willamette Chapter, Sacred Dance Guild.)

### PERSONAL GROWTH THROUGH SACRED DANCE

Movement is an affirmation of life, a necessary function of being alive. Dancing is an affirmation of the creative and joyful aspects of life and is an expression through the body of one's feelings and beliefs. Dance demands and elicits involvement of the whole person-spirit, emotions, senses, body and intellect. a religious expression dance facilitates a reconciliation of one's beliefs with one's whole person, not just the intellect. In this way, dance can bring about profound personal growth for both dancers and observers. Truths not revealed in words can be communicated through dance.

For some, this process of growth is simple and painless. For others, it is a difficult and painful process as one's knowledge about oneself, others and God are experienced in the dance. Beliefs long held may not be congruent with what the body reveals and secrets kept out of consciousness may rise to consciousness. Dance often brings about a deeply-felt awareness of self-image. If there are aspects of the self unacceptable to the person, he or she will experience anxiety. This can be as true of the observer of dance as the participant.

Beliefs accepted intellectually may not penetrate to all layers of the person. For instance, Christians may have re-

jected the old belief that the body is inherently evil, but when the body is experienced pleasantly and joyfully through dance, the old belief may surface. Deeplyfelt but long-suppressed needs may arise through dance. The need for touch, the need for communion with others on a feeling level, the need for movement itself, are some examples. A long-denied need for playfulness and frivolity may be experienced through dance. Though dance can be a way of fulfilling these needs, the patterns of denial are not easily broken. Often the first response to the awareness of these needs is rejection of the experience, and only with loving patience can an individual, group or congregation be led to the experience of fulfillment through dance.

Hostile reactions of groups or individuals to a dance experience or performance may be rooted in some of these reactions, though work poorly done or flagrantly flying in the face of accepted beliefs may also be the cause. Attention to artistic excellence or sensitivity to the readiness of a group for change cannot be ignored. It is also important for religious dancers to recognize the implications of their work as a means of personal growth, and develop knowledge and skills which will foster, rathern than stifle that growth. The following attitudes are an essential foundation:

1. Recognize that each person is a unique individual to be valued just as they are. We may not like another's reactions but he or she is entitled to the reaction; we cannot quarrel with another's experience. Often the strongest reactions re-

veal the greatest potential for change.

- 2. Recognize that a large group setting is usually not the appropriate place to confront deeply-experienced needs or long-cherished beliefs. Make sure the goals of your work are appropriate to the setting or you may find your work only serving to close the door to change rather than open it.
- 3. Recognize there may be a conflict of purpose between artistic demands and personal growth issues. It is appropriate for a group leader to make choices and set priorities if necessary, postponing one goal in order to achieve another.

It is not necessary to become a professional therapist to lead a sacred dance group. It is important to develop the ability to foster trust and open communication among dancers and congregations if the full potential of dance in worship is to be realized. The sacred dancer is responsible to be as artistically polished as possible and as true to his or her religious convictions as possible, in the dance. When these two are united, change and growth are bound to occur.

( © June 1982 Susanne Renner)

<sup>(</sup>Ed. Note: The following article is by Denny Young who writes for the <u>United</u>
Church Observer. It appeared in the April
1982 issue, Ontario, Canada.)

### DANCE

Held aloft by the angel Gabriel, the figure of Mary in cruciform postion appears to surrender and accept the reality of her Son's destiny.

The joy and sorrow, life and death, inspiring tales of heoism and the terrible moments of defeat told in the Bible are related to the congregation not in word or song, but with dance.

Liturgical dance is growing more popular as an alternative or addition to the spoken word or music of the worship service.

The Rev. Clifford Elliott of Bloor Street United in Toronto sees liturgical dance as a form of non-verbal communication badly needed in the church. "Except for the stained glass windows or the organ prelude, our church is heavily weighted toward the use of words to communicate our faith," he says. "Dance recovers the use of the human body and reminds us that the body as well as the soul is part of creation."

The congregation of Bloor Street and members of the Toronto Dance Theatre (TDT) maintain a close relationship as both groups examine the potential of liturgical dance.

One of TDT's co-founders and artistic directors, David Earle, has created 11 religious dances in the course of the company's 13-year history. He believes that dance can sometimes better communicate the mysteries of faith and the intense emotions of the Christian exper-

ience.

While dance in the church is often seen as experimental today, many early Jewish and Christian celebrations used it regularly. The Bible tells of Miriam who, while celebrating the crossing of the Red Sea, "took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances" (Exodus 15:20-21). We read that a triumphant David, returning from his victory over the Philistines, is met by women "singing and dancing" (I Samuel 18:6).

In the 17th Century dance played an important part in the educational system being developed by the Jesuit order and students regularly performed biblical ballets.

The most common form of religious nonverbal communication would have to be the procession which still exists as an important tradition in the Christian Church.

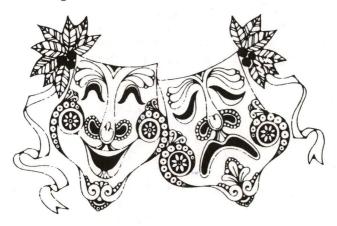
In this century, the art form has continued to expand as choreographers find the rich drama of the Bible provides wonderful inspiration for the creation of dances.

David Earle believes that as people grow more and more mistrustful of the spoken and written word, they look for other forms of communication to express their emotions. According to Clifford Elliott, people feel rather than hear the message as the body causes a resonance throughout the church. "When nothing is being said, some other kind of communication is set up which strikes a chord in our emotions. We have neglected emotions as a part of wor-

ship....We're too intellectual."

TDT is very aware of the concerns of some church members as dance is introduced into the worship service. "We are very careful," says Earle. "I'm not looking for shock value or actions not appropriate to the religious community."

Accepting liturgical dance is also a way of accepting the arts into the spiritual community. "I don't think of the use of dance as merely as vehicle for worship," Elliott states. "It is worship and has a message of its own."...



In	this issue	
	From the President	1
	SDG's 25th Anniversary (Adams)	3
	Recommended Reading	4
		6
	"Bit" Reviews	
	Films	13
	JOURNAL	
	Fifty Years SD (Thimey)	14
	Gesture-Christian Art (Deitering)	21
	Thots Dance-Worship (Skidmore)	25
	Artistic Excellence (Rickenbaugh)	28
	Growth thru SD (Renner)	31
	Dance (Young)	33